

gang had reached Father Point, and I left Bio for that place on the 23rd May, reaching my destination the same afternoon. We were fortunate enough to secure board for myself, and office room at the house of Pilot Charlemagne Chouinard. As it happened, the day following my arrival was the Queen's Birthday, and on Jim, who spoke French like a native, remarking on this fact to the *habitants*, who had assembled to celebrate the inauguration of the telegraph, they wanted to know who the Queen was? where she lived? and whether she was really yet alive?

At first, the arrival of an ocean mail steamer at Father Point was an event of unparalleled interest to the *habitants*; and the furore it created was surprising, if not laughable. Every pilot, fisherman, and farmer living in the neighborhood, it seemed, had congregated at the point on these occasions, and they ran about gesticulating and jabbering in the most frantic manner. If one did not know the cause of so much excitement, he could be easily excused for surmising that some terrible catastrophe had happened. It would never enter his mind that a steamship quietly approaching the Point was the cause of so much wild and uncalled-for clamor. The steamers arrived regularly once a week, generally on Sunday, but they often turned up on Saturday, and once or twice they surprised us by putting in an appearance on Friday. In the stormy fall weather they were sometimes detained as late as Monday or Tuesday.

During my term at Father Point I was fortunate enough not to have missed either an outgoing or incoming steamer. The press despatches were prepared by an agency of the Associated Press in Liverpool, and sent in duplicate in two separate tin boxes, each box nearly a foot long, and made in the shape of a roll of music, loaded at one end and so constructed as to float top end up when thrown into the water. The idea being that should one become lost, through any mishap, we had the other to fall back upon. In clear weather the steamer could be seen coming up the river a long way off—25 or 30 miles—and the boatmen, Regis Chambord, and Alexander Bellanger, who were under my control, had sufficient time to get their boat out, and were generally well into the stream, ready to board her before she arrived opposite the point. When the weather was clear and calm the steamer came very close to the shore, so close that the passengers could be distinctly seen crowding her decks watching the news boat and welcoming the pilot on board. In foggy weather the steamer groped along very slowly and carefully, firing a cannon at short intervals to announce that she was in the neighborhood. I had a monster cannon, which I fired in response, and so the steamer crawled along, exchanging shots with us until our men boarded her. The first time we fired our big gun the concussion was so great that it broke nearly all the window panes in the houses within a radius of a mile from the Point, and caused many an exclamation of "Seigneur!" or "Mon Dieu!" among the people. The Allan Steamship Company, upon the opening of Father Point office, made that place the rendezvous for their pilots, and the boat which went out for the news box carried with it the pilot who was to take the "great steamer" up to Quebec. The despatches were generally of a length to occupy from two to three columns of a newspaper. Accompanying the news-box was a file of the latest London and Liverpool papers, from which I made copious extracts with which to supplement the written despatches. These des-

patches were sent direct from Father Point to the New York Associated Press, New York city; Quebec and Montreal offices having made the necessary wire connections to allow of this being done. From New York they were distributed all over the United States, suitable extracts coming back to Canada later on in the regular associated press despatches. So soon as the pilot had scrambled aboard the incoming steamer and the boatmen had got the news box safely in their possession, they made the speediest possible time for the shore, and I have known Chambord, a very wiry and supple chap, and handy as a seal in the water, jump into two or three feet of water when necessary to expedite his reaching land, and, once on *terra firma*, Nancy Hanks could not have made better time than he between the landing and the Telegraph Station. The steamer always slowed up when the news boat went out to meet her, and before she fully got under weigh again the boatmen had come ashore with the news, and it had been started on the wire at a rattling pace for New York.

While I was stationed at Father Point, France and Italy were at war with Austria, and events big with consequence followed closely upon the heels of each other throughout that eventful season. The news brought out weekly by the steamers was therefore of exceptional and special interest. The educated French Canadians who resided at Rimouski, amongst whom were Cure Tanguay, Avocat Michaud, Louis Gauvreau, etc., invariably drove down to the Point when a steamer arrived, to hear the latest news from the seat of war. These people were, as indeed were all the French Canadians, intensely French in their sympathies, and as I read to them the fall of Magenta, and, later on, of Solferino, before the French arms, their excitement knew no bounds. They were pugnaciously positive that the late Marshal McMahon and General Canrobert—they pronounced this Canrobair, with the accent on the bair—were the greatest military geniuses that the world had ever produced.

The outgoing ocean steamer discharged her pilot at Father Point, and the boat which went out to bring him ashore carried with it the news box containing the latest news from this country up to 7 p. m., which included everything of interest that had transpired since the sailing of the steamer from Quebec in the morning. This news was prepared in New York, and was telegraphed direct from that place to Father Point. It was placed by me in the news box and addressed to the agent of the Associated Press in Liverpool for distribution in the Old Country. As the season advanced into the autumn the weather was sometimes extremely boisterous, and boarding the steamer was attended with great difficulty and danger. Those living along the sea coast know that to board one of these steamers in a howling gale and rough sea, accompanied by a cold, pelting rain or blinding snow storm, is a very hazardous undertaking. Once or twice I was afraid the steamer would pass out without the news box, carrying her pilot with her; but our boatmen were not easily daunted, and after getting away from their wives and children, who on such occasions did their utmost to prevail upon them to remain at home, they determinedly set out to "do or die." I was always greatly relieved when these brave fellows returned in safety after such perilous expeditions. Father Point is nearly 200 nautical miles below Quebec, and the run between the two places occupied anywhere from 10 to 14 hours, according to the tide and weather. The names of the Allan

mail steamers at that time were the "Indian," "North American," "Nova Scotian," "Anglo Saxon," "North Briton," and "Hungarian." Some of these steamers have, I believe, been converted into sailing vessels, and are still plowing the seas somewhere. The Allans built a light-house at Father Point at their own expense for the benefit of their steamship service, but as it proved to be a real benefit to the entire shipping of the river, the Government took it off the Allans' hands and paid them for their outlay. I had charge of this lighthouse. The light was a red, stationary one, there were 38 lamps, and the seal oil we burned was not obtained from the high-toned Behring Sea seal, about which so much noise was recently made, and which came very nearly embroiling England and the United States in war. Nor had this same oil the perfume of attar of roses. The lamps required cleaning, trimming, and replenishing every day, and as the villainous oil smoked badly and blackened the lamp chimneys, this was no easy task. It was also necessary that some one should remain awake and watch the lamps all night. The man I engaged for this job proved to be unsteady, and for five or six weeks I had to perform all the work about the lighthouse myself, including the night vigil. This was a most weird and wearisome watch. The lighthouse was situated on the extreme end of the point, a long distance from any dwelling. It was octagonal in shape, three stories high. I'll never forget the long, dreary nights I spent in this lonesome house on a lonesome spot. The moaning of the sea, the screaming of a sea-bird, or the human-like cry of a seal sent a timorous, eerie shiver down a fellow's spinal column that took all the heroics out of him; and the fact that a poor unknown sailor had been washed ashore from a recent wreck, and was buried in the sand right alongside the lighthouse—burial in the cemetery at Rimouski having been refused him by the Church—did not tend to allay this feeling. I finally secured a steady and respectable old man, named John Ross, to look after the lights. As his name would indicate, he was of Scotch descent; but was born down among the Frenchmen and could not speak one solitary word of English. In the course of the summer we moved the telegraph instruments from Pilot Chouinard's house to the lighthouse, where I had good office accommodation.

The shooting around Father Point in the fall of the year was excellent. Plover and wild duck were abundant along the shores and in the bays, and partridge and rabbit were plentiful in the woods. As Bobby Burns tells us in his August song:

The partridge loves the fruitful fells;
The plover loves the mountains;
The woodcock haunts the lonely dells,
The soaring hern the fountains.

Whales could be seen frequently passing up and down the river quite close to shore. I don't know to what species they belonged, but they were huge animals. Their spouting apparatus seemed to be modelled on a powerful plan, for they could, and did with apparent ease, throw a good-sized stream of water a long distance straight up into the air. After this interesting object lesson in piscatorial hydraulics they would disappear under water, coming up again, a few minutes later, forty or fifty yards further on to repeat the operation.

Late in the fall, when the ice had become pretty solid, seals could be seen floating past on good-sized cakes of ice, the heat of their bodies having melted a sort of bed or basin in which they lay. Codfish were caught off the Point in large quantities. I tried my hand at