

so much as to watch his antics while driving home the oxen when they strayed from the farm. It may seem rather cruel on my part, but the oxen were so stubborn, and I could do so little with them, that I thoroughly enjoyed Barney's way of mastering them. For instance, it was my custom after ploughing for a few hours, to turn the cattle out to graze, and sometimes they went a considerable distance from home. As soon as I wanted them again I would call Barney, jump on his back, and, without saddle or bridle, career at breakneck speed over the prairie after them. As soon as we got up to the oxen the fun would commence. Barney would run up with open mouth, making great pretences, then as suddenly jump back again to avoid a kick. Sometimes he pinched them, sometimes he could not get a chance, for they kicked like mules; but Barney was too cute and wide awake to be caught, and he would dance from one side to the other in a most comical way, always getting the best of it. In the end, they were glad to give in and make a bee line for home, as they did on this memorable occasion.

Well we got back after a long struggle, many times did we all stand for a few moments with our backs against the storm; many times it seemed impossible to proceed. "But there is a turning to the longest lane," and so after a time we reached the roofless shanty. The sun shone out, the snow hastily disappeared, and everything was again lovely.

To the "tenderfoot" the thunder-storms, which sweep across the prairie bring many surprises. Conceived on such a magnificent scale, they are even terrific and awful to witness. When the clouds of heaven seemed to divide and drop down molten fire, I could not help thinking of the last day "When the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."

The glorious sunsets, extending around, perhaps, half the circle of the horizon, I shall never forget. Many and many a time have I watched the sun setting in all its grandeur, and while I have been thrilled with the magnificent spectacle, I have also felt sad at losing a friend. So long as the sun is above the horizon, the mosquito, the inveterate and blood-thirsty enemy of the white man, hides his head in the grass and will not come out in the dazzling light, but the moment the sun disappears, the spell is broken, and the mosquito speeds on his cannibal errand.

How can I describe the *Aurora Borealis*? On a clear, cold winter's night it is fascinating beyond expression. The different peaks

stand out clear and well defined. The streams of light issuing forth assume a variety of colors from a pale red or yellow to a deep red or blood color.

A little about the seasons. You generally know what kind of weather to expect, and can prepare to meet the changes. In the dry season there is little rain, in the wet season there is little else. In the cold months it is cold indeed; from November to March everything is tight and icebound. The opening of Spring can be counted upon with considerable exactness; for instance, in 1880 the water in Lowe's Creek, about ten miles distant, came down on the 17th of April; in 1881, on the 19th; and in 1882, on the 20th. This dates practically the opening of Spring. Ploughing and seeding begin about the last week in April, and throughout May there is generally little rain to impede progress. Most of the ground for wheat is prepared in the fall. The variety commonly grown is the Scotch Fyfe, and, as you know, it is the very best wheat raised in the world. Fall wheat such as we grow in this Province, does not thrive in Manitoba. The wheat seeding is mostly over by the 15th of May, the seeding of oats by about the 1st of June, the seeding of barley the 15th of June. You would be astonished to see the amount of seeding done by one farmer; it is quite common for one man to seed 100 acres of grain, and to work it himself, save during harvest.

In travelling through well-settled districts you will see fields of hundreds of acres of grain nodding and ripening in the sunlight, and it is a pretty sight. There are no fences dividing the different farms, wood is too scarce to use in fencing. You may travel for miles and see no separating mark between farms, but here and there, at every half-mile, a mound of earth thrown up, with a stake in the centre indicating the number of the section.

After seeding comes the wet season, and then growth is very vigorous. This is the time also for breaking. The first year I went on my farm, I broke 75 acres with one yoke of oxen. Of course I started early in May, as I had no crop to put in, and kept at it until away into July. One acre per day is counted pretty good work for oxen. I must tell you something about my breaking. I well remember the first furrow I turned. I had never been used to farm-work, much less to driving oxen, and it was quite a new experience. In Manitoba the oxen do not wear yokes, as they do in this Province, but are harnessed like horses.

(To be continued in our next.)