

little knoll, which commanded a better view of the town, his steps were slow and dragging, and he frequently pressed his right hand upon his knee, as though his tired legs, which had become sore and aching with the long walk, were unequal to the task of carrying him to the summit of the rise.

Dropping upon the ground under the flickering shade of a Balm of Gilead, he stretched out at full length, and with an involuntary sigh of relief, pulled the smooth-worn visor of his home-made fur cap down over his eyes, and lay for a time in motionless repose.

Not until a kingfisher rattled his harsh challenge and dove, from the limb of a dead tree down into the still water of the Qu'Appelle river, did Rodney stir. The guilty terror in which he started up, just as the bird splashed into the water and rose with a small fish in its mouth, would have convicted him of having been asleep, even though he had not rubbed his eyes and yawned. Then he sat for a moment, with his elbows on his knees and his chin in his hands, looking dreamily at the shimmering river and the little trading post where his whole life had been spent.

His return from this first solitary journey into the world seemed a greater event to him, after his three days absence, than home-coming from years of foreign travel has seemed to many an adult. He wondered what had happened while he had been away and what his mother and the boys about the fort would say to him.