

MINNESOTA AS SEEN BY TRAVELERS

A DANISH VISITOR OF THE SEVENTIES. III

Several chapters of Robert Watt's American travel account *Fra det fjerne vesten* have appeared in the two preceding issues of MINNESOTA HISTORY (see *ante*, p. 157-173, 309-325). The Danish observer brings his comments about Minnesota to a close in the sections herewith translated. His account of the Sioux War, which comprises chapter 21 of his book, has not been included in the present translation since most of its information is derived from Isaac Heard's well-known book on the subject and nothing new is added. After viewing Minnehaha Falls, St. Anthony, and Minneapolis, Watt departs on a Mississippi River steamboat, and he gives a vivid description of his journey on the "Savanna" to Prairie du Chien.

JACOB HODNEFIELD

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ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

[Robert Watt, *Fra det fjerne vesten. Skildringer fra Amerika*, 260-271, 297-311 (Copenhagen, 1872)—*Translation*]

XX MINNE-HA-HA AND ST. ANTHONY

Minneapolis, Minnesota.

As soon as a person has made a few acquaintances and can answer in the affirmative the question as to whether or not he has seen *Minnetonka* and *White Bear Lake*, he is usually taken around in the neighborhood of the capital; for every St. Paulite is rightfully proud of the city and would feel hurt if one should leave the North Star State without having seen the wonderful caves and tunnels that wind and water have made in the soft limestone rock, without having admired the singing and laughing waters of the Mississippi and its branches, and without having visited the prettiest towns near the White Rock. It was of

no avail therefore if I objected that the season of the year was so far advanced that I must continue my journey. I must of necessity enjoy Minnesota to the full. But I did not regret in the least that I extended my stay beyond the time first decided upon. The beautiful natural environment, the wonderfully refreshing climate, and the interesting life that moves in this great western state must appeal to everyone, and my friends were tireless in keeping me in the spirit of it.

A vehicle drives up to the door of the hotel and a countryman, accompanied by an Americanized Dutchman from Batavia with whom I had come in contact during a sojourn in Melbourne, steps into the room and announces that we are going on a trip. Objections are of no avail and I surrender to my new acquaintances. As a result we roll out of St. Paul in a good vehicle along the heights that form the background of the city. My countryman is an old pupil of the school of hard knocks, a trained, practical polytechnician, who had eked out a tough existence for a few years, part of the time as a peddler, and who finally had found his proper niche as draftsman in the railway office of the aforementioned *St. Paul & Pacific* Railroad. While he formerly walked afoot from town to town with his pack on his back, he now maps out and draws plans for new towns along the railway lines; and while a few months ago he lived by drawing and cutting patterns for women's waists at twenty-five cents each, he now draws maps of rivers and states—and incidentally he has a good income. The Dutchman also has seen several *ups and downs* in his life. He was reared in wealth and luxury in Batavia, and later went to Australia and started a large tea business in Melbourne. A financial crisis finished him and he went bankrupt for several hundred thousand. Some time later the fine and elegant gentleman turned up in Minnesota, where he confidently started life over again by carrying planks on his back in a lumber yard. At the next shifting of the scene he appeared as a professor of French language and literature in the city of Minneapolis; at the third, as an expressman in a railway station; and at the last one that has occurred, he has become a bookkeeper in the

aforesaid railway office. He has not lost his good spirits under all these vicissitudes of fortune, but he laughingly told me the story of his life to date while we continued our drive among the picturesque surroundings.

A large number of elegant country houses with small orchards in front are spread about on the heights that overlook the Mississippi and its valley, which here is rather narrow. Toward the west stretch the prairies, while the waters of the river hasten in the opposite direction toward large and glittering cities and thence toward the flowery pride and glowing sun of the South. In St. Louis and New Orleans and even in Mexico the cargoes carried by the steamboats that we see gliding downstream, are awaited. My attention was called to one of the most beautiful of the villas, the estate of the late Dr. Borup, a Dane who was one of the first settlers in Minnesota and who came here early and amassed a fortune in the fur trade, which here is extensively carried on.¹ He accepted conditions as he found them among the first immigrants,— who were on good terms with the Indians,— married a half-breed Indian woman of the Chippewa tribe, and died a few years ago generally liked and respected by all. I had made the acquaintance of his son a couple of days before, a lively and genial young man who already has a considerable business in St. Paul. He spoke of Denmark, which he had never seen, and of his relatives there, and expressed the desire some time to see the land about which his father had told him so much. There was in his entire appearance something that reminded one of a powerful Norseman, while, at the same time, because of the Oriental air about him, one thought of the great Chippewa chiefs who at one time perhaps had raised their *tepees* on the place where his substantial and well-equipped warehouse now stands.

We stopped at a declivity near the Mississippi and stepped out to inspect *Fountain Cave*. That is one of the aforesaid caves in the white rock near the river's edge. A stream from within apparently has hollowed it out, and some maintain that a person

¹ For a sketch of Dr. Charles W. Borup, by Grace L. Nute, see *ante*, 7: 150.

could penetrate a couple of miles beneath the surface either by canoe or by picking his way along the narrow white sand edges of the stream. The water is fresh and clear. But without a light it is not possible to penetrate to any distance. In the parts of this cave that have been explored there are three rooms of considerable size, of which the largest is said to be a hundred feet long and about one-fourth as wide and high. Fortunately nothing has been done in the way of artificial embellishment, no obtrusive guide presents himself for service, and a person can enjoy peacefully and quietly the sight of this mysterious opening in the earth and see the obscure stream pour itself forth between the green banks and empty into the Father of Waters. At some distance is the so-called *Carver's Cave*, a similar opening in the banks of the Mississippi. It is named for Jonathan Carver, who in 1767 made a treaty with the Indians at this place.² In the report of his expedition into Minnesota he gives a very fantastic description of this cave, which the Indians called *Wakan-Teebe*, or the dwelling of the Great Spirit, and he tells among other things that on its walls he saw a great many Indian hieroglyphs, which must have been very old as they all were overgrown with moss. He threw a small stone with all his strength into the interior of the cave and said he heard it fall in the water and, in spite of its smallness, it produced a great noise that echoed throughout the terrifying surroundings. *Carver's Cave* is now partly destroyed, the destruction having been wrought largely by excavations for a railroad that passes the place. Thus the romantic and poetic flee before the noisy steam monster. Their temples are disturbed by present-day wheels and machinery.

From this interesting cave we drove to Fort Snelling, erected on the crest of a high and precipitous bluff. Here one gets a fine view of the Mississippi into which, below the firm, semi-natural bastions, the Minnesota River flows. In the distance can be seen the town of Mendota, where the railways form a junction; the heights with the Indian graves; and, immediately below, the picturesque Mississippi Valley, which extends toward St. Paul. Fort Snelling, which was built in 1820, is the first place in Min-

² See *ante*, p. 157, n. 2.

nesota where the whites obtained a firm foothold.³ It could hold its own, of course, against the Indians, but in a "civilized war" it would not be of much use in spite of its high location. Soldiers in uniform, wearing hats and white gloves, who at first glance reminded one of the former French guard, kept watch on the grounds and on the bastions; a couple of sinners, linked to iron balls which they dragged after them on chains and followed by a comrade with a loaded gun, passed us with a stubborn, scornful grin; and the music corps of the regiment played a lively dance melody in the open. The open court is surrounded by one-story houses where officers and men live. The doctor proved to be a lively young Frenchman from Brittany. He invited us to his rooms, did us the honors with Parisian ease and elegance, and treated us to French cognac, which he served in medicine glasses.

"We are not at Tortoni's," he said smiling, "but, after all, the cognac is good. It is for my patients."

He was obliged to decline our invitation to accompany us, as he had a prisoner at the hospital and, although the fellow was chained to the bed, the doctor did not dare to leave him.

We drove on without him across the hills and arrived at the real goal of our excursion, the famous *Minne-ha-ha Falls*, which every American knows at least by name and hundreds visit yearly. The water that comes from Lake *Minnetonka* goes singing and dancing down a stony bed, which is not very wide, until it comes to a brink surrounded by oak trees, from which, glittering, sparkling, and laughing, it leaps down into a miniature basin, while every ray in the wonderfully beautiful belt of water is braided and twisted in a peculiar manner until the whole assumes a silvery whiteness. Nature has formed a circular place about the falls which is fenced in with luxurious trees. The lively, joyous, and charming impression that one gets in connection with the merry

³ The first detachment of soldiers arrived in 1819 at the mouth of the Minnesota River to establish Fort St. Anthony, later known as Fort Snelling. Temporary quarters were erected near the present site of Mendota, but after Colonel Josiah Snelling became commandant in the summer of 1820 the location of the fort was changed to that which it still occupies. William W. Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, 1: 137-139 (St. Paul, 1921).

rushing of the waters has given rise to the name "Laughing Water." Here one does not get the powerful, almost crushing, sensation that possesses one when he hears the thunder and sees the fury of Niagara. The difference between the two falls, so famed in song and story, is the same as that between a charming little sonata and one of Wagner's deafening compositions, or between a well-done painting of a pair of rose buds and Kaulbach's magnificent "Destruction of Jerusalem."

In the immediate vicinity of the classical, quiet beauty of the picture one reclines under a tree and beholds:

As light as a child, with a smile on her lips,
Minne-ha-ha play on stony ground,
Peep over the edge with irresolute mind—
And the next instant laughingly take the leap,

and one likes to enjoy this sight undisturbed for a long time. The surroundings, entirely untouched by the desire of men to improve and produce effects, combine into a harmonious whole such as one seldom has the privilege of seeing. Longfellow has done much to make the place famous among Americans.⁴ . . . Although many go to the "Laughing Water" simply because it is customary, I hardly believe it possible for anyone to visit the place without taking away an unusually deep impression that will not be readily lost.

The Falls of St. Anthony in the Mississippi River, which we visited later, at a distance of something like a [*Danish*] mile from *Minne-ha-ha* Falls, are much larger and much more imposing, but the charm that is characteristic of *Minne-ha-ha* they lack altogether. Moreover, a pair of very active factory towns occupy the two banks of the river. The water spirits have been seized by powerful human hands and compelled to turn the wheels in clamorous saw, paper, and flour mills and in large woolen mills and linen factories. Of course they have rebelled now and then when they have been turned aside with too much boldness from the wild antics with their companions, from their roaring and fuming and their dashing down from the rough rocks to send the foam up from the

⁴The passage omitted includes a long quotation, in English, from Longfellow's "Hiawatha."

massive blocks that are thrown in confusion below. Then it has not been possible to tame them to a quiet run and they have cut under the ground and suddenly sent whole factories into the depths.⁵ But nevertheless most of them must work. Here is not a question of gracious play as among the nymphs of *Minneha-ha*. It is in a real sense a continuous fight in which the advantage is now with one side, now with the other.

On one side of the falls, where the town of St. Anthony is situated, the waters have done a good deal of damage. We saw ruins of factories lying in the strong current below the falls, and we saw other buildings deserted and surrendered to the fate that awaited them. In Minneapolis, on the other hand, the wheels turn ceaselessly. An entire section of the city consists only of factories built side by side in the immediate vicinity of the falls. Minneapolis continuously vies with St. Paul for the foremost place in the state. If it has lost the honor of being the capital of Minnesota, it can console itself with the fact that it has entirely eclipsed its neighbor, St. Anthony, across the river. St. Anthony gave promise for a time of luxurious growth, but now it has come to a complete standstill and that in spite of the fact that it has the advantage of any city in the state as far as manufacturing facilities are concerned.

As a matter of fact a person gets the impression of a capital when going about the broad and well laid streets of Minneapolis. No world metropolis need be ashamed of the large and tastefully planned *Square* where the theater and a number of elegant stores are located, and especially of the imposing *Washington Avenue*, the city's main artery. Here it is possible to note, as everywhere in the West, what a free access to an extended terrain and the experience acquired by observing how thousands of cities have been built have accomplished in the way of ambitious establishments based on the calculation of a prosperous future. The first house

⁵ The first serious break in the Falls of St. Anthony occurred in October, 1869; when the ice went out of the river the following spring part of Hennepin Island was undermined and several buildings were destroyed; and another break took place in the summer of 1871. Dr. Folwell discusses the subject in detail in an appendix entitled "Preservation of the Falls of St. Anthony," in his *History of Minnesota*, 3: 333-347.

in Minneapolis was built in 1849 by Colonel Stevens, the president of the Old Settlers' Association, whom I had met on the *Red River* trip and whom I again had the pleasure of seeing here. But the Falls of St. Anthony had been discovered as early as 1730 by the French priest, Father Hennepin, who named them for his patron saint.⁶ The great volume of water, eight hundred *alen* wide,⁷ which precipitates itself from a considerable height, must at that time, in the grand, natural environment, have made an entirely different impression than it does now when half concealed by the two towns on the banks. Several bridges cross the Mississippi. If one wishes to see more waterfalls, a walk from Minneapolis across one of these bridges (among others a graceful suspension bridge) to the hundred-feet high *Bluffs* on the north in the town of St. Anthony will be worth while. Here two small waterfalls, the "Bridal Veil" and the "Silver Cascade," precipitate themselves over the edge of the rock and into the river.⁸

XXII A COUPLE OF DAYS ON THE MISSISSIPPI

Prairie Du Chien.

The dry summer that was so much to blame for terrible fires in the northern parts of America also had resulted in a very low water level in the Mississippi. Even under ordinary conditions the large steamboats go only as far to the northwest as St. Paul. Now, however, in order to make sure of a pleasant voyage down the renowned river after tearing myself away from Minnesota, I took the train — as a matter of fact it follows the river almost all the way — down as far as *Red Wing*, which lies on a little prairie surrounded by romantic bluffs and rocks and is washed by the waters of the Mississippi. The old Indian village, named for a

⁶ The correct date is 1680. Watt's statement, *ante*, p. 157, that Carver visited the upper Mississippi "about a hundred years after Father Hennepin" indicates that this error may be due to a misprint, as he gives the date for Carver's visit correctly on p. 412.

⁷ The Danish *alen* is equal to twenty-four and seven-tenths inches.

⁸ Bridal Veil Falls were located just above the east end of the Franklin Avenue Bridge in southeast Minneapolis and the Silver Cascade was below the university campus. *Hudson's Dictionary of Minneapolis*, 1891, p. 10; Newton H. Chittenden, *Strangers' Guide in Minneapolis and Surrounding Country*, 28 (Minneapolis, 1869).

famous Dakota chief, has now an entirely civilized appearance, and it is perfectly safe to speak Danish to every other man one meets on the street, for he is a Northman. The Scandinavians have made a real rendezvous of this region. In a settlement a half dozen miles from *Red Wing* there are in the neighborhood of eight thousand Norwegians.

The trip from St. Paul to *Red Wing* does not, as a matter of fact, offer anything of special interest. A person passes some villages, among which is one situated on the place where a "Red Rock," painted by the Indians, was the subject of their worship and known among them as "Spirit Rock," or *Wakon*. Not until one gets to *Red Wing* do the banks of the Mississippi present an exceptional view. Here *Barn Bluff*, two hundred feet high, leans over the water. The cattle graze at the foot of the bluff and on its top, but the sides consist of naked blocks of rock and these make the ascent difficult. With some effort, and after crawling about among the rocky points and stone quarries, one finally reaches the top and can enjoy a magnificent view across the river and the surrounding country. The river is seen turning as a broad, glittering band or as a great many small ones where numerous timbered islands or white sand banks divide the waters.

Below the *Bluff* lies the steamer ready for departure, and it looks very different from the vessels one is used to at home. At first glance it reminds a person more of an immense white-painted, oddly built house of several stories than of a ship. On the large, flat barge that carries this architectural phenomenon, the machines operate uncovered. The large number of Negroes, who are employed to attend them and to load and unload the flour sacks and packages of merchandise, are camped about rows of fires, lazily pulling at their short pipes, snoring, or humming "My old Kentucky home," "Poor Nelly Gray," "The black Shakers," or some other favorite song. It is amusing to watch them. The weak exhalation of romance and poetry that comes to a person on a trip through the *Go-ahead* country must be had in part from these people and their copper-colored brothers of the prairies and woods. The colored people play the prominent part in this respect. The pale faces have given everything they touch a pale hue, as it were, given everything the same tone of

business; and one must occasionally strike hard on the shell in order to knock it off so that what is underneath, as in the old churches, may be brought forth. On top of the aforesaid flat surface of the boat, which is rounded at both ends and has neither cargo nor gunwale like an ordinary hull, there rests on a row of slim pillars a large cabin. This and a couple of salons and a great number of small sleeping rooms—all opening to both the dining room and a sort of balcony—extends the entire length of the vessel. On top of this rises a somewhat narrower and shorter story equipped for the captain and officers. And on top of that is the pilot's room, a sort of glass cage which reminds a person of a photographer's addition on the roof of a building and in which the man at the helm stands. Above all this, toward the front and coming up from the high pressure engines always used on these steamboats, rise side by side toward the sky the two black iron smokestacks. A person can readily conceive that this structure, equipped further at one end with a single large, long wooden wheel without any covering, made a very peculiar steamer. It was exactly thus that the "*Savanna*" presented herself to me when I went aboard, and we swung away from land while the wooden wheel at the rear made the reddish-yellow waters of the river foam.⁹

Two large decked barges of the same length as this steamer had tied up at the sides, and the foreman of the "roustabouts" was urging on his black and lighter colored subjects in order to get them to put all things in readiness for the reception of cargoes of goods that were waiting farther down the river. His manner in speaking to them was not exactly kindly. If one of them can sneak away and not lend a hand, he does it with unspeakably great satisfaction, and he smiles in just as pleased a manner when he is caught at it and called "black scamp." All of them are full of fun and forever making a racket, whether it concerns playing

⁹ The "*Savanna*" was a stern-wheel packet of 373.82 tons, built at Brownsville, Pennsylvania, in 1863 for the Northern Line Packet Company, according to George B. Merrick, "Steamboats and Steamboating on the Upper Mississippi" in the *Saturday Evening Post* of Burlington, Iowa, for August 14, 1918. A file of the *Post* is in the library of the Minnesota Historical Society.

a joke on a companion or displaying their wits generally. When a line is pulled in they may sing, for example:

*The captain is in his cabin a drinking brandywine,
The Niggers are standing outside a hauling on the line.*

Nothing seems able permanently to put them out of their even good humor; and even when they quarrel among themselves and call each other "black Nigger" they very soon show their white teeth in a broad grin. The Negroes whom I have seen heretofore have not given me an especially high opinion of the intellectual status of the race. And I can well imagine how the southern states, where they are found by the thousands, must suffer by the free suffrage that is given them. All sorts of political adventurers make use of them at the time of the elections to the legislative assemblies in order to seize political power — a power that such fortune hunters never should possess. There doubtless are some talented and honorable Negroes, but for the present they are swallowed up in the large ignorant and easily influenced mass of their fellows. The present generation of whites in the South will have to pay dearly in some respects for the failure of their representatives to accept betimes the compromise that the government of the northern states offered before the war that was waged so bitterly had given the victors entirely free hands.

The relations are not good between the colored people and the whites in the southern states. I just had a curious proof of the rooted antipathy that still strongly obtains in many places by reading an item in a paper on board the "*Savanna*." The article was taken from a paper printed in New Orleans, and the fact that its contents were supposed to be taken seriously was proved by the place it was given in the paper as well as by the general way it was edited. The heading was "Deserved Punishment," and the contents were as follows: "In a railway coach a man's attention was drawn to a young lady of unusual beauty. For a long time he was lost in admiration of her attractive face, her large, dreamy eyes, and her abundant dark hair. He could not resist the temptation to speak to her, and, as she traveled alone, he sat down beside her, thinking she was Spanish. 'Excuse me,' he began, 'for taking the liberty of speaking to you, but you remind

me so strikingly of my sister — you are just like her.' 'Is that so?' answered the one addressed. 'Perhaps your sister is a mulatto; because that is what I am.' It is easy to understand that the importunate man withdrew immediately and expressed no desire to continue the acquaintance he had made," concluded the paper, while the editor sets forth some profound observations concerning the well-deserved punishment that the fellow had received and the warning that inheres in the occurrence for all men who might have inclination to, yield to similar propensities on a journey.

I called the attention of a couple of men on board to the article, which under ordinary circumstances one would have taken for a joke. They smiled, shrugged their shoulders, and, as if to avoid all further discussion of the matter, began to call my attention to the banks of the river, which here were changing in the most picturesque manner.

We had arrived at what many consider the most beautiful portion of the Mississippi. About a score of miles from St. Paul the river widens to a lake about a mile wide, which is known as *Lake Pepin*, and for a distance of eight miles one traverses this mirror of water surrounded on all sides by wonderful bluffs and rocks that take on the most fantastic forms. The banks along the entire course of the upper river are formed of masses of soft limestone,— now bare; now overgrown with grass, trees, or brush; now red, as if the Indians purposely had fashioned "Spirit Rocks"; now white as chalk, like the foundations of St. Paul,— and everywhere wind and weather have hurled them into all sorts of grotesque shapes. Nowhere else, perhaps, are these characteristic formations so noticeable as here at *Lake Pepin*. A person seems to see old castles with turrets, domes, and walls and immense amphitheatres that but await the thousands of spectators that they could hold. Disappointing imitations of gigantic monuments and statues, churches, and palaces meet the eye in all directions as if an entire titanic world suddenly had been deserted by its inhabitants, who had left imperishable works for us pigmies to admire. The trees extend down to the very water's edge in places, while in others they crown the high slopes and rocky peaks that rise six hundred feet above the river; and at

regular intervals small villages peep out in the valleys. There is grandeur and beauty on every mile of the way. But a day's journey gives a person a clear idea of the entire panorama that unrolls itself before one's view on the deck of a Mississippi steamer. If he wishes a change of view he must wait until he has journeyed several days toward the south, until he comes among the sugar plantations and cotton fields that are spread about on the level banks, until he sees the orange groves and glowing wealth of flowers. Then, instead of the industrious Northmen in cheerful little colonies, he will see Negroes lazily sunning themselves before their tumble-down bamboo cabins, and he will see crocodiles moving about in the water or tied to boards and offered for sale on the market in New Orleans. But it is always the same river he sails on, always the old, mighty Mississippi!

"Maiden Rock" rises to a height of four hundred feet at the lower end of *Lake Pepin*. The place looked rather wild and melancholy as we passed it, for the shadows of night were beginning to enshroud everything. But then it owes its name to an event that is not of a merry kind, if a person may believe the legend, which is as follows: Winona, one of the most beautiful of the Dakota maidens, loved a young, daring hunter, but her parents wished her to marry a warrior of the Wabashaw tribe, to which they themselves belonged. They did everything they could to persuade her. On the day before the wedding, however, Winona went to the aforesaid rock, climbed it, and stood on its highest point while she sang her death song. When her relatives and friends saw her there they hurried toward her calling to her that she could have her wish; but she did not believe them and, before any one could prevent her, she hurled herself from the point and was dashed to pieces on the rocky shore below. Her story is told as the steamer glides past *Maiden Rock*. Her name is preserved in Minnesota, for one of the most important towns that the Mississippi passes on its course through the state is called Winona.

We tied up there the next day, and the "*Savanna*" made such a long stop that we had ample time to view the city that recalls to posterity the loving Dakota maiden. For the stranger there is interest in watching the loading of the boat. There are no

such things as piers and tow paths connected with Mississippi navigation. The steamer runs head on as far up on land as possible, and does it unhindered, as the flat bottom of the boat is adapted to such a procedure. A board walk is shoved onto the bank, the song of the Negroes begins, and they carry on board on their shoulders the sacks of grain, flour, and potatoes for the southern markets. During the night the scene takes a more colorful turn as a large iron kettle filled with burning shavings and resin is placed in the fore part of one of the barges. A strong reddish glow spreads over the activity on board and on shore and is lost up the sides of the bluffs. The groups of passengers on the balconies of the boat, the labor of the Negroes, the din in the warehouse — everything lends character to the performance. When the loading is finished, the iron kettle is dipped in the water. A sudden darkness envelops everything. The steam whistle sends out the echo between distant and near hills, the wheel splashes, and soon the large floating house is again in motion.

Some time passes before it is possible to distinguish objects about us in the profound darkness that follows the artificial illumination of the torchlight and it is difficult to understand how the helmsman from his station away up in the cage is able to follow all the peculiar bends of the river, but he does. He knows every little turn that the whimsical waters make; is familiar with all the islands; with all the many *Sloughs* * or false canals through which he may take a short cut during high water; all the dangerous trunks of trees called "snags," which from time to time have drifted downstream and have been caught in the bottom by the roots so that they lie in an oblique position like dull lances ready to penetrate the ship that is luckless enough to run into them.† And should the helmsman be doubtful of the course, the captain would know the fairway, as he has made the Mississippi trip from St. Louis to Fort Snelling regularly for thirty years, from

* The word is pronounced, curiously enough, as if it were spelled *Slews*.
[*Author's note*]

† These tree trunks with one end just below the surface of the water, over which ships can glide unharmed when going downstream, are called *Snags*. [Author's note]

the time when there were no whites in the state other than those at the fort.¹⁰

When I am tired of staring at the dark rocks on land, of watching the large steamboats that pass us with their colored lights and shrill whistles that receive an interminable answer from the "*Savanna*," or the large rafts of lumber going downstream partly guided by two men who have taken up their abode on them for a couple of weeks and have tents on board and a fire, I retire to the large, comfortable salon, where the passengers sit in circles about the stoves and exchange stories. The men are sitting by themselves smoking, while the ladies have retreated to their own domains. A printed notice informs one that "No one must go into the ladies' salon without special invitation." On the same document, which is held in a large frame, are other regulations for the guidance of the men, as: "Ladies who travel alone have a right to seats at the end of the table near the captain," and also, "The men must remain standing until the women have been seated." Very probably these extracts from the *A B C* of politeness have been necessitated by the fact that on American railways and steamboats there is but one class of passengers and they are all on equal footing. These notices remind one of those posted in the elegantly equipped rooms of a reading society that gleamed with gilded mirrors, upholstered sofas, and Brussels carpets, where I was somewhat surprised at seeing, among other things, a request to the men not to spit on the carpets. Dickens has pictured the Americans' love of spitting in the choicest manner. It must be admitted that a man is impressed continuously here in the West by the perseverance as well as the virtuosity with which a Yankee is able to spit, especially when he has taken a good bite of the tobacco plug that he unfailingly carries in his pocket. To sit close to a red hot stove with the feet as high as possible, apparently in deep thought, and spit to the right and left, seems yet to form an integral part of the enjoyments of a western pioneer. In order to enable the man who is skilled in the art to

¹⁰ The captain was probably Alex Lamont. See the *St. Paul Pioneer* of May 28, 1871, for an announcement of the arrival of the "*Savanna*," "commanded by that 'jolly old soul,' Alex Lamont."

hit his mark, the spittoons in America are of an imposing size. Until one becomes accustomed to it, the sight of this spitting, and of these unique target practices in general, makes a strong impression on the stranger, and, moreover, he frequently comes within range.

We did not see La Crosse, an important trade and manufacturing city situated in Wisconsin, as we did not learn until morning that we had been there while most of the passengers were wrapped in sleep; and the rest of the towns we passed before we tied up at my destination were small. Some of them consisted only of a couple of houses, but they were called towns and sometimes christened with very pompous names. When the settlement of the banks of the Mississippi began, a great number of speculators rushed into the market and bought land. All laid out towns, gave them names, had magnificent maps drawn with an endless number of streets, and spread abroad the most flattering prognostications of the town's future, but sometimes the owners were not able to sell a foot of land. If through accidental circumstances the immigrants settled elsewhere on the river, the new town remained only a "paper town," that is, it existed only on their enticing maps and in their glowing advertisements.

I said farewell to the Mississippi's glorious waters from the airy castle of the helmsman. I had seen a great number of smaller rivers and streams empty into it during our journey, but I had to land before coming to the place where the Missouri meets it. From the distant west, close to the divide where the waters set their course toward the great ocean through the Columbia River, comes the wild restless Missouri through the portals of the Rockies, through wild mountain regions, through huge forests, and over endless prairies — altogether a distance of 750 Danish miles before it reaches the Mississippi. The sight of the confluence of these bodies of water is said to be one of the most impressive a person can witness.

The "*Savanna*" ran in on the river bank below *Prairie du Chien* on a clear, beautiful morning. The small houses of the village lay illumined by the sun on the little plain, and I had the opportunity of spending a delightful day there before the night train took me back to Chicago, which had been my headquarters during my excursions into the great and interesting West.



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