

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, JULY 9, 1898.

IN THE THOUSAND ISLES

A DELIGHTFUL TRIP THROUGH CHARMING SCENERY.

"Astra" Tells of her Exciting Experience in Going Through the Rapids—Some of the People She met and What They Were Like—Other Incidents.

"Told in the Twilight" is a charming title for a song, and calls up visions of cosy corners in shady verandas, moonlight, summer, and two young people in their salad days telling each other the old, old story behind a sheltering trellis work of vines. It is an attractive picture but when the scene is laid in the chilly twilight of a morning in early June, when the voice is that of the bell boy at a hotel and the tale he tells is—"Half past three o'clock, boat starts in an hour" the emotions called up are of an entirely different character. It is no joke this getting up in the middle of the night, after a long tiring day of sight-seeing; and catching a boat which will persist in leaving her wharf at such an unchristian hour, is enough to try the temper of a saint, especially if the saint's stomach is empty and the prospects of obtaining nourishment before half-past seven o'clock are slender in the extreme. A hurried cup of boiling coffee on the way to the wharf served by a sleepy waiter in a restaurant who seems as anxious for his breakfast as any of his customers, and if possible just a little crosser, is a mitigating circumstance as far as it goes, but that is not very far, and we are told by medical men who ought to know what they are talking about that at no time in the day is the machinery of the human body at as low an ebb, as at five in the morning. I think myself half past three is the time when the pendulum comes nearest to stopping, but, of course, that is a matter of opinion.

However, one is willing to sacrifice something in order to see the sun rise amongst the Thousand Islands, and after all everything—even breakfast—is sure to come to those who wait, if their patience will only hold out.

The sun seems slow in getting up and setting about his proper business of lighting things up in general and warming the atmosphere; but perhaps it is because he knows so well what a treat awaits him when he finally climbs out of his bath, that he wants to prolong the pleasure of anticipation. But whatever his motive, it really does seem later than his usual hour of rising in the Maritime Provinces, for though that staunch little steamer "Corsican" of Montreal, pulls out into the beautiful harbor of Kingston, on the dot of half past four, the god of day is only just peeping sleepily over the horizon line. A sleepy newsboy is endeavoring to sell papers to two crusty old gentlemen who grumble loudly because the said papers are not this morning's, and the inevitable bride and groom are looking for a secluded corner where they may whisper soft nothings to each other undisturbed.

Ye gods and little fishes! will the crop of June brides and bridegrooms ever fail, so long as youths are susceptible and maidens fair and kind? We have no less than fifteen blushing brides on board in different stages of newly weddedness, from the calm and experienced matron who took her vows a whole week ago, and consequently looks down upon all the more recently wedded ones from a superior height, down to the bride of an hour who comes on board in time for dinner, from the folds of whose gown grains of rice fall out with every movement, and who takes delighted peeps at her wedding ring whenever she thinks herself unobserved, just to see if it is there still, and how it looks since she examined it last.

One other couple who look almost like a boy and girl, so young are they, are not only painfully ignorant of the world and its ways, but terribly conscious of their verdancy. They have trouble with their menu card, and are obviously afraid of the waiter at dinner time, but finally, after much anxious consultation, they succeed in making out a list, and carefully avoiding soup and entrees, they dined upon roast beef, mashed potatoes and green peas; after which the bride indulges in strawberry shortcake, and the groom in apple pie, and having worked their way so successfully through the trying ordeal of dinner, they pluck up courage to indulge freely in all the fruit, and nuts and raisins they can obtain, and all quite happy though terribly shy. Another couple are quite as green and much more common, without being in the least conscious of

either fact. They are both large, rather florid, given to loudness, and extremely anxious to impress all beholders with their importance, just as if none of the other fourteen couples counted in the least. They chew gum both singly and in concert, and shout remarks to each other with a sang froid that would be truly admirable if it were not rather repulsive.

Then there is the quiet, dignified bride whose husband seems rather delicate, and who looks after him with careful motherliness, the dashing, stylish bride who is fully as conscious of her own importance as the gum chewer, but in a more lady-like manner; and the happy young couple who have just been married before coming on board, and are just as full of life and fun as a pair of kittens. They are not in the least foolish or inclined to give people an opportunity of laughing at them, but they are both young, and unusually good looking, and they are off for a good time. So they laugh and chatter incessantly, and the bride makes so many conquests amongst the waiters during dinner that she might have everything in the dining room if she wanted it, whether the rest of us starved or not.

There is no difficulty in identifying these newly married couples, if one is at all given to reading the newspapers, for it is easy to keep track of them by the scraps which are missing from the different papers which are scattered in such profusion about the saloon. Here is the evening "Star" of Montreal with a piece clipped out from the "June Weddings" column; and there a Toronto "Mail and Empire," with a clipping missing from another part of the column. A similar hiatus occurs at intervals in the other papers and by watching the clippers at work one can allot the names pretty accurately if they care to take the trouble.

Really the occupants of the boat seem to be so evenly parcelled out into couples that a passenger who happens to be alone, feels like the superfluous woman or man, as the case may be.

But I am getting ahead of my story, for we are still sitting on the forward deck huddled together in a shivering group like so many sheep, and wondering hungrily how soon we can begin to expect breakfast.

My chum and I had thriftily looked out for the inner Christian by providing a stock of light refreshments from the nearest pastry cook's shop before we started, but the healthy human stomach craves something more substantial than cream puffs and sultana cake before five o'clock in the morning and turns with longing to the thought of sea trout, ham and eggs, or liver and bacon, anything in fact which smells savory and has staying qualities. It is all very well to talk about the clearness of the mind when the stomach is empty and I may have a grossly material mind, but I have found from personal experience that stomach is king when the subject is in perfect health, and dominates the brain to such an extent that sustained thought is impossible with the king clamoring for sustenance.

"Look Astra, quickly! The sun is up, and we are sailing out among the islands! Isn't it lovely?" cries the companion of my journey. "The sun has been up for at least ten minutes" I answer snappishly, "only you couldn't see it on account of all those warehouses; of course they had to keep the boat at the wharf until it had risen, and we had missed one of the things we came to see. I can't see anything remarkable about the islands so far, I don't believe there are fifty, all told, and I wish I was at home in bed."

"You will feel better after breakfast dear," responds my equable friend, and with the withering retort that it looks as if I would not pass the crisis of my ailment for some time, I turn up the collar of my jacket and subside into sulky silence.

That's the worst of these cheerful and even tempered companions, they always see the bright side themselves, and therefore never give you any sympathy when you need it. The islands really are not bad though, on the whole, and there certainly are a good many of them over a hundred I should think, and in the clear cold light of early dawn with the sky shading from rosy pink to palest blue the scene is lovely enough to make one forget everything but the cold. If I were not so sleepy I should count those islands and make sure for myself how many there were. Groups on groups are now passing, sometimes they are closely clustered together

reminding one irresistibly of a large mother duck surrounded by her family and sailing majestically down the broad bosom of the lordly St. Lawrence. Again there will be one great island standing in solitary grandeur in the centre of the stream, crowned with lofty trees through which one catches glimpses of a picturesque cottage with lawns and flower beds extending almost to the water's edge, and perhaps a couple of tiny bath houses standing with their feet in the water. Other islands look like fragments of rock thrown carelessly on the surface of the glistening water, and in some places one can see great stretches of rock lying only an inch or two below the surface of the water, and apparently threatening us with instant destruction. It is really—was that the sound of a bell? It can never be the breakfast bell—alas no, for it is barely half past six. But if it is not breakfast why does the steward put his head out of the saloon door and thrusting the bell forth ring that brazen messenger of comfort lustily? May all the blessings of land and sea rest upon the heads of the culinary department—it really is breakfast!

It is a bad thing to be vulgar even when one is fully conscious of the fact, but to be thoroughly, hopelessly, stridently vulgar, and not to have the least suspicion of the true state of affairs, is a misfortune indeed.

We have the best illustration of the latter case at our table that I ever met with. The table holds eight, and the seats opposite us are occupied with an American family of four, father, mother, big son of about fourteen, and precocious little daughter of ten. This is how they stand in actual numbers, but it is impossible to be more than seated at the table without knowing that only the head of the house really counts, for he is self assertive to a degree that I have never seen equalled off the stage. He has no secrets apparently, from the outside world, and his chief aim seems to be to impress the bystanders with the amount of money he is spending, and his ability to meet his financial obligations.

"What are ye going to have hey!" he demands in a voice which might almost have been heard on shore, seizing the menu card which the waiter has placed before me, and reading it aloud at the top of his very powerful "organ" "Bananas, porridge, porridge and cream; fried sea trout, ham and eggs, beefsteak, mutton chops, scrambled eggs, boiled eggs, fried potatoes, dry toast, buttered toast, rolls—What'll ye, take, have some beefsteak Maria?" Maria who is a large handsome woman with fine dark eyes and a smile so stereotyped that it seems to have been stamped upon her features by years of practice, announces in a low voice that she will have a little toast. "Toast!" yells her lord "toast did you say? Do you know that your breakfast costs fifty cents no matter what you eat? Fifty cents and you want some toast—Josephine! Josephine nearly bounds from her chair with alarm—Perhaps you are going to have some toast too?" Josephine is not sure that she will have anything but a cup of coffee, but perhaps she might try a little bit of toast with it.

"I want to know if that's all your going to eat" shouts her irate pa "I've got to pay fifty cents for your breakfast mind you whether you eat it or not, and you and yer ma set there and eat toast. Why ain't ye going to have some meat Maria? 'Because" says Maria goaded into forgetting her smile for the moment, "I don't want it."

"Don't hey, waitin' till ye get to a restaurant are ye? me paying fifty cents for a breakfast ye won't eat and then buying yer meals at a restaurant! Two dollars for the four of us this breakfast is costin me and seems as if I had to eat it alone—James! What are you goin' to have? It's costin' me fifty cents mind, so ye better eat some. Here's porridge, beefsteak, mutton—"

"Waiter," I interrupt with icy suavity, "Would you kindly get us another menu card, as the one at this table seems to have been leased?"

We get our breakfast at last, and as Maria consents to have some fried eggs and bacon, there is a short lull at the other side of the table, broken only by dictatorial shouts at the waiter, and criticisms of the fare. "More coffee Maria, have some

more, won't get anything else till dinner time you know, cost too much to have lunches on these steamers and I am near dead broke now.

"Let's see"—here our interesting vis a-vis produced a notebook and pencil "there was twenty dollars fare, and seven for the baggage, and two more for getting it all on board—how much did it cost me for the cab Maria? Well I did think I could do it for a hundred dollars but if I get to Montreal with my life I'll be thankful. Are you going Maria? Well all I have to say is I ain't got the worth of my money this trip."—And the interesting American family melted slowly away and were seen no more until we met again at the dinner table.

The islands are glorious, such scenery I never imagined in my mildest dreams, wooded slopes undulating gently down to the water's edge, fairy islands bearing little pavilions which look in the distance as fragile as the little houses we provide for the birds, and again huge stretches of land like Hound Island which is a mile in length and I forget just now how many thousand feet wide, but I know it contains a regular village of cottages and a big summer hotel. And by and by we pass Thousand Island Park, which is a sort of a religious summer resort, under the direction of the Methodist body, and contains besides a huge church or meeting house, some four hundred cottages, a regular summer town.

The scenery grows just a little tame though after one has gazed at it for five or six hours, and half past three, is undoubtedly an unearthly hour to get up; so I shall be glad when we reach the rapids for they are sure to be exciting. The fifteen newly wedded couples are disappearing by degrees, and one comes upon them unexpectedly in secluded corners, usually with their hands interlocked and one or both of them fast asleep. I'd like to go to sleep myself, only I don't want to miss the scenery.

"Wake up Astra, you are missing some of the most beautiful scenery we have passed through yet; we are in Alexandria Bay, and you really must see it!"

"I don't care if we were passing through the Vale of Cashmere, with all the roses in bloom" I answer crossly, "I am going to finish my sleep if I never see another island again as long as I live. You can call me when we come to the rapids"

"I can't understand any woman who earns her living by her pen and therefore owes a duty to the public, being so wickedly indifferent to the beauties of nature," says my chum severely. But I am asleep again before she had finished her sentence. Half an hour later I am aroused by a peculiar sound, and peeping cautiously over the back of the wide double sofa, I espied the indignant lover of nature lying flat on her back with her mouth wide open and a most unromantic sound issuing from her ruby lips.

There is something delightfully suggestive of peril in the very word "rapids," and when the Gallop Rapids are sighted, there is an instant commotion on board as everyone scrambles with undignified haste to get a good post of observation. Not that the gallops amount to very much any more than the du Peat Rapids, for they are merely short stretches of troubled dark green water, but they serve as an introduction to the Long Sault Rapids, which are to my mind by far the grandest of the long succession of rapids we pass through between one and six o'clock. The unsophisticated traveller would naturally imagine as I did, that a full head of steam would be required to carry the steamer through the foaming water and enable her to present a sort of opposing force to the angry rush of the breakers; but instead of that the steam is almost entirely shut off and the boat is carried through the seething churning mass of water which boils and leaps around her, by the sheer force of the current depending exclusively for her safety upon the skill of her pilot, and the strength of the four men who are kept at the wheel until the rapids are passed. The Long Sault Rapids extend for nine miles down the river, and I was assured that the current carries the steamer through them at a speed of twenty miles an hour.

There is really no danger, as fatal accidents never occur but standing on the deck and watching those huge green billows rearing their heads almost over the gunwale, or feeling the steamer apparently trying to climb up the waves much as we climbed the mountain at Montreal, a goodly amount of faith is required to assure one of that comforting fact. And besides that, there is an uncomfortable circular sort of motion about the vessel which gives one a feeling that she has lost her bearings and may be whirled upon the rocks at any moment. She has a disquieting way of quivering too, which is far from reassuring, and I think most of her passen-

gers are quite satisfied with their experience, and breathe a sigh of relief when we glide once more into smooth water.

After the Long Sault there are really no other very exciting rapids until we reach the famous stretch at Lachine. The Coiteau Rapids are very beautiful but they only extend for about two miles and after the Long Sault, seem quite tame. The Cedar rapids come next, and though the guide books assure one that the passage is a most exciting one the vessel having a very peculiar feeling as if she were settling down to sink, I utterly failed to experience the sensation, though I closed my eyes and tried religiously to imagine I was sinking.

On leaving the Cedars, we plunge directly into the Split Rock Rapids at the entrance to which stand two huge boulders which seem almost impassable for a vessel of our size, but a sudden turn carries us safely through.

Directly beyond lie the Cascades the last of the rapids before we reach Lachine, and these are really very fierce and turbulent. They are more like the great Whirlpool Rapids for they shake and toss the steamers as if trying to whirl it around but we are soon through and the least eventful part of our journey lies before us.

I am not, as the boys say "much on figures" myself, but I was assured on the best of authority after passing through the last of these four rapids that in the eleven miles in which they cover, the descent is no less than eighty two and a half feet.

Just after passing the Cascades we come to the sharply defined line where the Ottawa River joins the St. Lawrence, and in the bright June sunshine the brilliant green of the St. Lawrence, and the dark blue of the Ottawa look almost as if they were painted on a map, so marvellously sharp and clear is the dividing line.

Some of the brides have grown seasick and retired to their staterooms, leaving their devoted spouses to wander forlornly about the deck; others are palpably tired and just a little inclined to be cross, while all of us show a most unbecoming line of crimson across our noses, and a rich accumulation of freckles all over our faces.

It is a blessed diversion where we pass under the great iron bridge of the C. P. R. and begin to look for the most celebrated, as well as the most dangerous of all the great St. Lawrence rapids, the Lachine. It is a scene hard to describe; like Niagara Falls it is difficult to do justice to them, for even if they do not equal the Long Sault in beauty, it is easy for the merest novice to take in the extreme danger of these seething waters where the rocks are so close to the surface it seems absolutely impossible that the smallest vessel can find a path between them. In one spot it seems as if we were aground at last, for the shelving rocks are so close to the steamer's side that she appears to be climbing upon them, and powerless to check her course. We are absolutely coasting over them in about twelve inches of water apparently, and one catches her breath at the foolhardiness of a mere handful of men defying the forces of nature so recklessly. Down we glide right into the whirlpool of waters, and a moment later the rocks are behind us, and we are placidly getting up steam for our run to Montreal, while the brides begin to remove their thick veils and replace their unbecoming travelling caps with wonderful structures of ribbons and feathers, preparatory to making their triumphant entry into the city.

It has certainly been a delightful trip and we assure each other hypocritically that we would not have missed it for hundreds of dollars, the scenery was so entrancing, and the sail so invigorating, but at the same time the streets of Montreal look very inviting with their bustle and life, and when it comes to a fifteen hours journey there is a great deal to be said in favor of a Pullman car. ASTRA.

Rapid Shoemaking.

One of the big Lynn shoe shops made a pair of ladies' boots for the Paris exhibition of 1889 in twenty-four minutes. A notary public followed the operation, watch in hand. For this feat the pair of shoes went through the usual routine of the shop, but at exceptional speed; fifty-seven different operators and forty-two machines were concerned in the work, which required twenty-six pieces of leather, fourteen pieces of cloth, twenty-four buttons, twenty-four button-holes, eighty tacks, twenty nails, two box-toes, two steel shanks and twenty yards of thread. Since that time the division of labor upon a pair of shoes has become still greater, and there is a larger number of machines employed, with the result that a pair of ladies' boots can now be made complete in this factory inside of twenty minutes.

Like Lightning.

A man was praising his wife, as all men ought to do on proper occasions.

"She's as womanly a woman as ever was," he said, "but she can hammer nails like lightning."

"That's remarkable," said a listener.

"Yes, sir," said the first speaker. "You know lightning never strikes twice in the same place."—Exchange.

Cheese Exported From Rome.

The value of the cheese exported from Rome is only \$1,000 less than the value of the paintings, cheese being second article on the list of exports from Rome.