

Quickly gaining headway, she swept grandly down, entered the narrow jaws of the channel and swung obediently around the double turn at its head. Soon the pilot rang to stop the engines, reverse, then to back, drifting his boat slowly down the chute under complete control. About half way a rugged, fort-like islet blocks the channel center, leaving but a narrow gorge on the Washington side through which the boat had to pass. Just below this the channel crooks to the left, and the stream is again divided by a half-submerged ledge, making a very difficult crossing. Next the Oregon shore, scarcely a boat's length beyond, is Memaloose island, where the whole volume of the tremendous current is hurled squarely against the blackened bases of basalt. Compelled to run close to the towering bluffs on the left, the steamer was necessarily pointed directly toward the island; making the turn to avoid it placed her in the worst possible position to encounter the next danger—a boiling, swirling under-tow which recoils from the iron-stone walls of the island and drives like a maelstrom squarely across the channel and upon a long, low-lying ledge near the Washington side. Slowly backing, in order to "drift" around the difficult turn above, rendered it an impossibility to turn ahead and gain sufficient headway to weather the ledge mentioned; for the resistless cross-current, catching the boat on the port bow, would throw her over against the rock and crush in her side. Therefore the pilot was compelled to drift the boat, taking care to get her far enough down before allowing her to go in against the reef, otherwise the strain might prove too much for her frame and break her in two. This he skillfully accomplished, only the vessel's guard touching the ledge with but a slight shock; whereupon spars and lines were rigged to fend the steamer past the final obstruction of the "Long Narrows." Rounding gracefully into the rock-walled basin colloquially known as the "big eddy," the *Harvest Queen* opened the environs of the town below, flaunted her banners before the majestic mantle of Mount Hood and entered the blue waters of the Middle Columbia. Steaming down the quiet reach to the city, her prolonged whistle, followed by a peculiar drone, awoke the echoes far inland.

The following year, when the rails were laid down the gorge of the Columbia to Portland, was a season of unusually high water, and a general clearance of river craft took place from the Middle Columbia. The departure of the *R. R. Thompson*, flag-ship of the division mentioned, was witnessed with regret by the citizens of The Dalles. Steaming slowly up the river, she turned and came back, passing the city front with colors flying, union down, and bore away for Portland. Those who watched the boat disappear around the turn below heard her hoarse whistle sounding long,

low and mournful, as though bewailing the downfall of steamboating on the Middle Columbia.

From that time, indeed, the middle river has worn a lonely, deserted air. A solitary steamer plows its blue waves to-day, though the trains running along the Oregon shore enliven the primeval solitude at intervals. The shrill whistle of the Atlantic fast mail lingers in the dense forests of fir to rival the panther's scream, as the train rushes around the precipitous bluffs, clinging to the narrow bands of steel, and trailing long coils of smoke behind. The passenger, sitting in his palace car, sees the cascades packet out in the stream, holding steadily on her way to The Dalles; a moment later she drops far astern; looking, to make sure, he is astonished to see her right abreast again. The train darts behind a fir-clad knoll to emerge far in advance of the steamer. While he scarcely believes it can be the same boat, she is so far astern, he is startled to find her rapidly gaining upon the train. Then he begins to understand the optical illusion caused by the ever changing course of the grade along the mountain side.

The solitary pilot may lean upon his wheel, perhaps, and recall the days when the old *Idaho* parted the waves before him, her decks black with merchants and miners on their way to Salmon river. No farms along the river then, no railroads on the coast. The luckless miner, returning from the fickle fields of Florence, compelled to make his way on foot down the "trail," never realized the fact that in a little more than twenty years the iron horse would cross the continent and shake with its mighty rumble and jar the very cliffs over which he crept. But the pilot saw the changes wrought in the almost impregnable walls by the dauntless railroad builder. First, the solitary workman, lowered over the edge of the cliff, pierced the hard iron-stone by means of hammer and drill; next, the great wound blown in the face of the wall with a powder undreamed of in the days of the miner; soon an army was at work there, and the pilot was compelled to keep away, far to the opposite side of the river, while the mountain sides clashed and echoed with the thunder of countless blasts. Great volumes of smoke, vast clouds of dust, masses of earth and broken boulders were hurled aloft, many of the smaller fragments falling far out into the stream. At last a level roadway was blown in the very face of the mountain walls, and the pilot's occupation was gone.

W. E. CAMPBELL.

"We, the people," to the number of 30,000, swooped down upon the *Baltimore* a few days ago, and when we departed it looked like the rendezvous of a tribe of monkeys. Where is the man who says Americans average 100 pounds of soap?