

finding the bearing-trees, the hickory and the burr-oak already mentioned, and which guided them to the square four inch post they were seeking.

The compass,—the *vade mecum* of every pioneer,—enabled the prospectors to follow the blazed trees on the surveyor's course from the section post up the Capitol Hill along the line of the future King street, till they arrived at the post marking the corners of sections thirteen, fourteen, twenty-three and twenty-four—a monument which a classical writer would style the *Milliarium aureum* of Wisconsin. A wisp of hay twisted around the limb of a tree showed that some human pilgrim had halted there already, and wished to leave a trace of his presence. No man or mortal, beast or bird, was, however, visible. The day was cold, the snow deep. So after a brief halt, the explorers went on across Fourth Lake on the ice, purposing to spend the night at the cabin of St. Cyr. But it was very dark before they reached the shore, and no sign could be detected of the haven of their hope, or even of the military road. Coming at length where an oak had been blown down, they kindled a fire of the dry branches, between two huge limbs and rolled themselves each in his blanket, beside its trunk. They passed the night, one of the three being up all the time, and at work with the hatchet to keep the fire going. They lay without shelter or food, save a remnant of bread and pork, but no water or even whisky.

Day-light revealed, after two hours' wandering, the way to Blue Mounds, where they felt at home. Houseless wanderers find the earth a cold bed in winter. One experiment, sometimes tried by Strong, gave him what he needed. After supper he would push his campfire a rod away from where it had been built. By this change of base he secured a dry and warm, though fire blackened, mattress for spreading his blankets. No warming pan could be better.

The next month, February, 1837, Mr. Strong and John Catlin were employed to survey and stake out the lots around the capitol square. They came from the west in a sleigh with a driver. Their base of operations was the log cabin of St. Cyr. Deep snow and snow-storms sometimes drove