

and generally waggons and farming implements for sale, and invariably the words "Billiard Saloon" were painted on the sign of the small Station hotel. We saw some land cultivated, but very little compared to the thousands of acres unbroken. At this season much of this prairie country was under water, the train having to pass through small lakes where the grading was low and defective. Arrived at Winnipeg on the 24th April. Finding Winnipeg much superior to what I had been led to believe, fine large handsome buildings, wide streets, brisk gentlemen with business on the brain, fashionably dressed ladies (a little perhaps too showy to be quite in accordance with English taste). Indians walking about in their many-coloured blankets amongst their stylish friends, many of these "braves" having painted faces and feathers ornamenting their heads, while others looked dirty and untidy, much like some of the swarthy gipsies at home. Having said farewell to Winnipeg, we go on board the river boat and purchase tickets to Portage la Prairie, charmed with the beauties of the Assiniboine, a broad and winding river, with thick belt of trees on each side, with here and there a cleared spot with quiet homestead, garden, and the usual, &c., all looking fresh and warm in this Manitoba April sun. Arrived at the Portage in time for supper, to which we did ample justice, as we had already found out the appetising power of the North-West air. Spent ten days here looking around in search of suitable farms, with so much to choose from, and yet "To the West!" is the cry.

Packing a waggon was something altogether new, and after many awkward mistakes, we get under way, oxen and waggon with cow "hitched" to behind and we start for the Little Saskatchewan. The "ups and downs" of the following few days live in my memory, bright and vivid, our troubles getting through the mudholes, and then our joy at beholding the flowers which everywhere enamelled the prairie, they were as beautiful as any upon which the greatest care had been bestowed, we made them into bouquets in turn, each trying to make the prettiest, many of them being quite as lovely as those which grace our English dining tables. Wild fruit trees are in abundance, raspberries, currants, gooseberries, while the strawberries seem literally to cover the prairie. Pine Creek, a hilly picturesque spot is passed, and the Big Plains are reached; here a few hours rest under the poplars, the heat being greater than we had before experienced, the flowers and beautiful butterflies affording the children great pleasure. We now travelled through one of the greatest grain growing districts in the great North-West, and after contending with the many difficulties of travel at this season, we arrived at Minnedosa, on the Little Saskatchewan River, on the 20th May. We could not but admire the pretty little plain, even in the thick misty rain that was falling, it looked like a nest among the hills which surround it. The weather in this country is so much clearer and dryer than in England that it seems to have an exhilarating effect upon every one, and we certainly felt as happy the morning after our arrival at Minnedosa, as any family surrounded by every luxury. Minnedosa at this time consisted of half-a-dozen houses, and as many tents, and these divided by the Little Saskatchewan River.