

trees have been springing up and there is a future claimed for them.

There is no rose without its thorn nor any prairie jaunt without its stings—flying-ant stings. These abandoned insects are even worse than mosquitoes. They “come off the grass” in multitudes no man could number, and do their best to eat you up. In spite of all Sir John Lubbock and other eminent *savans* have said, I must confess, I see nothing to admire in them. Their sting is like wire, and I was their vast pincushion.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE GREAT LONE LAND.

Three hours of inky blackness, a half-light of a dull grey dun, a dawn stretching along the horizon like the painful welt of a burn, a fading of the flush into filmy blister, and a full round sun risen from the earth like a golden coin from the mint of God—this is day in the Northwest Territories.

The porter tells me we are in the Territory of Assiniboia and that the time changes to allow for Westering. He is not to be entrapped by any questions on the subject and scored one by assuring me it is because the sun cannot keep pace with the C.P.R.

The Indians of this Territory formerly used heated stones for cooking their food and so were called “Stony Indians,” the Ojibway of which is *Assin*, a stone and *bwan*, an Indian. It is from these words we have the name Assiniboia.

The land is suitable for either ranching or agriculture, but the wire fences have sewn the shroud of the cattle industry in this district. The ground is broken by shallow dells and gullies, with gentle rising ground between. At Qu’Appelle we have reached an altitude of 2,050 feet. A few miles westward, we enter the great Regina Plain, a treeless expanse of agricultural land, composed of rich soil, which does not change to a depth of twenty feet.

Regina, as every one knows, is the headquarters of the thousand sleuth-hounds known as the Mounted Police. These true rough-riders who patrol the plains and boundaries to prevent cattle “lifting,” the illicit

liquor trade, and to look after the Indians, are mostly men of gentle blood. These top-booted troopers, brawny and brown with wind and sun, active, supple, and erect, give you above all else an impression of hardy, clean manhood. And why not? They live all day under the big, blue sky, and fear nothing that breathes. They must inevitably possess the equanimity of good digestion and well-oxygenated blood. The country, too, recasts them into broader mould. No man could be petty who sweeps constantly through such leagues of pure air.

Regina is the capital of the Northwest Territories. These Territories comprise an area of 2,500,000 square miles, and are more than twice as large as all the provinces put together. In 1871, the Government paid the Hudson Bay Company \$1,500,000 to surrender their privileges and powers over this area, and it was then merged into the Crown.

The Territories are now moving for autonomy, and want to be made into provinces. They have petitioned for an inquiry into their position. They have no power to amend their constitution, to borrow money, or deal with public domain. They cannot establish asylums, charities, or hospitals. They have not the administration of the criminal law, nor any right to subsidize railways, or to direct their own immigration policy.

Manitoba would like to relieve the pressure by taking to herself a slice of Saskatchewan and Assiniboia. Not that she has really anything to complain of, for although Manitoba is the smallest province in Canada, she is the keystone to the whole, and must be content with that very great distinction. Her plaint reminds us of the tragic story of a greedy little boy we read of:

“Once when I was a little boy,  
I sat me down to cry,  
Because my little brother  
Had the biggest piece of pie.

’Twas not but I had quite enough,  
But then I couldn’t see  
The reason that my brother  
Should have twice as much as me.”

Two hours’ run from the capital is Moose Jaw, with a population of 2,500. The name is an abridgment of the Indian name, which