



ASSINIBOINE RIVER.

is an air of antiquity and romance about the rough gray wall, pierced by a low gateway, and flanked by rude turrets which lean as if they had heard of Pisa, and were trying to introduce the graces of civilization into the wilderness. Here the blue banner of the Hudson Bay Company has floated for many years above the little quadrangle where the white man and the red man have met to barter the products of Europe for the skins of the wild north land. "*Pro pelle cutem*," skin for skin, is the motto of the Company, and many a poor fellow has paid for his gains in peltry by losing his own scalp at last. Millions of skins have been gathered from the lonely forest and the frozen waste into these low dark store-houses. Ship-loads of cloth and beads and powder and fire-

water have passed over these battered counters to civilize the Indian. Here the Governor of the Company once ruled over the land of Assiniboia. Here the half-breeds gathered themselves in 1869 to resist the authority of the Canadian government. It was the dream of their leader, Louis Riel, to found a nation of mixed races, and that sensational love of liberty which runs in the Gallic blood spoke in its native language and after its ancient fashion here in this far wilderness. It sounds like an echo of Paris to read the deliverances of the *Comité National des Métis de*

*la Rivière Rouge* which were issued from this gray old fort. But at last the power of Great Britain arrived on the scene in the shape of a military force, which Colonel Wolseley, now of Zulu fame, had led across the swamps and through the trackless forests between Winnipeg and Montreal. The nation of mixed races vanished into thin air, and the province of Manitoba came into substantial being. This was in the summer of 1870, and since then the old fort has fallen into the humdrum of a mere commercial life.

The Red River at Winnipeg is about a hundred yards wide. The gray and rugged Cathedral of St. Boniface still stands on the eastern bank, and the bells of the Roman mission still "call from their turrets twain." But the "voyageur" no longer sweeps along the current and hears their far-off vesper chiming. Twenty years ago the first steamboat puffed its way down the river, and the silent-gliding canoe fleets have vanished. There is nothing of hardship or adventure about a voyage on the Red River now, and it was simply in the interest of physical comfort, and for the sake of variety, that we chose to leave Winnipeg by water. The *Minnesota* was run up alongside of the steep bank (for in this country they do not need wharves), and we embarked for St. Vin-