

Seeds of Pine

but on the whole they are quiet. Also they stare at me like they were gargoyles and whisper the one to the other. This is not because of rudeness—not at all! Even the white armoured Sir Galahad would find it difficult to be knightly in the circumstances. For months they have done naught save stake out and measure up, shovel gravel, dig ditches, set transits, sweat and swear, for a railway, you may have heard, is built with heavier implements than batons, pens, or golf-sticks. No woman has come near them except certain will-o'-the-wisps whom the Mounted Police did straightway turn back to town. Their lives have been filled full of contest, hardship, and loneliness, so that every mother's son desires, above all else, that some woman (she may be either saint or sinner) put her hands upon him and tell him he is a truly fine fellow and worthy to be greatly loved. This is why they will give her all their money and not because they are of the earth very earthy.

Do you waggle your head at me? Do you? Then I care not a straw. It only means you do not comprehend the ways of men at our frontier posts.

Some men are here preparing to take the wagon trail to Grand Prairie in the Peace River District. This trail, they tell me, is one hundred and fifty miles long, and may be traversed in six days, a journey which from other points formerly took as many weeks. Hitherto, it has seemed the far-away edge of the world, a place for none save the adventurous blooded and sturdy, but in this day it seems to lie at our very door, for, in the North, one