

white shirts and who could not tell the difference between the tracks of a mink and coyote—of what use were they but to measure out for him tea, sugar, and



**Prairie
Chicken**

other stores in return for the skins of the musk ox, caribou, bears and foxes which he brought to the fort?

Wrapped in his blanket and attended by his two squaws, Prairie Chicken and Big Moccasin, who were carrying bundles of furs, Almighty Voice stalked into the log storeroom at the Hudson's Bay Company's post one morning.

Then he stood at one side, as though the matter did not concern him at all, while the clerk turned over the skins and calculated how many "made beaver" (a "made beaver" is a token worth fifty cents) the company would allow for them.

Meanwhile Prairie Chicken and Big Moccasin wandered round the storeroom, gazing at the many strange things therein.

And young Bradley, fresh from Aberdeen, very junior clerk in the service of the H. B. C.—which means shop boy

—looked at Prairie Chicken, for she was a graceful figure in her Indian dress with the broad, gayly decorated knife belt round her shapely waist.

Moreover, she had a roving eye, and she looked at young Bradley, and the look was such as only a young and pretty woman can give.

For she was but eighteen years old; and at that age many Indian women possess a peculiar power of fascination, though hardships soon change them into tired beasts of burden.

Perhaps Almighty Voice, chief though he was, was not the husband of her desire; perhaps she was weary of her companion slave, Big Moccasin.

Prairie Chicken was a woman; and a woman's mind is a mysterious thing, a tangled skein of whims, wisdom and contradictions.

But she looked at young Bradley, and Bradley looked at her; and Big Moccasin (who was the first wife) caught the glance on the way and made a mental note of it.

Then Almighty Voice, his business finished, silently strode out of the store, leaving his wives to follow him to the "tepee" which was set up on the bank of a creek about half a mile away.

There is not the slightest doubt about the fact that Percy Bradley was seven or eight different kinds of born fool, and since birth he had been accumulating asininity.

It was to give him a chance of unburdening himself of this load that his thoughtful friends had shipped him out to Canada, to this "really excellent opening" in the service of the H. B. C. at Fort Gillette, in the Far Northwest.

There time hung heavily on his hands, there were no amusements; his chief officer in the store was an old Scotchman, an old timer of the old timers who had but little sympathy with the young recruit.

And, worst of all, there were no white women there; and only a man who has felt it knows what it means to exist in a land where they are not.

Trad
their p
gentlew
ones int
the gre
So I
the " to
again, r
No c
the Cre
ful to b
might
from an
were lo
choice v
There
is more
tongue
studyin
But I
another
she " tl
lord and
And,
came ag