

south-easterly direction to Minneapolis, entering the United States territory at Portal, a small town on the boundary, half Canadian and half American. On this road from Estevan, 25 miles north-west of Portal, to Pasqua, a distance of 145 miles, there is no station, none being required owing to the unsettled and barren state of the country. As the road, however, requires to be kept in order the Company has erected section houses at intervals of 10 to 20 miles, in each of which a staff of railway employés live. The staff usually consists in the summer season of two section foremen, with five or six men under them. A section of the road, usually 10 miles each way from the house, is allotted to the staff or gang. One foreman takes half of the section "hands," and starts out in the morning on his handcar, which is pumped by some of the men, to some faulty spot on his beat. The other foreman does the same, in the opposite direction. They take out their dinner with them, and do not meet again till night.

They lead lonely lives, as may be imagined, in this desolate country, the express rushing past once a day, or an occasional freight train stopping to replenish their water barrels or leave them provisions, are the only breaks in their monotonous lives. Church there is none to attend, and unless the Missionary penetrates their solitude to administer to their spiritual needs they may pass weeks or months without a public Service, or a word spoken to guide and help them in their daily life, or to teach them the first principles of the Christian Faith.

It was with the object of doing such work as this that I undertook the journey in October last through this country, by trail, if trail it can be called. I left Estevan on October 8, and reached Pasqua on the 14th, being six days on the road. A more lonely trip I never took.

From the time of leaving one of the houses in the morning to "making" another at night, nothing was to be seen but a trackless desert, swept continually by high winds, a low line of blue to the far south—the Dirt Hills of Dakota—being the only landmark. The whole country had a short time before been ravaged by prairie fires, so its dreary condition can be imagined. It was sometimes with difficulty that I could find a little patch of dry grass that had escaped the fire for my horse to feed on at noon.

Most of the country is of a "hummocky" description, such as may be seen here and there in small patches in Manitoba. Viewed from the windows of a railroad car by a casual observer when it is covered with grass it may look fair enough, but attempt to drive over it! one might just as well attempt to drive over a town of ant hills; and even going at a walking pace the process is most painful, and hard on both horse and "rig" (Anglicè "trap"). This may be some solution to the railroad traveller of the somewhat unaccountable sight of a trail running in the railroad ditch, almost touching the rails on which his carriage runs, and causing him to wonder what the prairie traveller sees so attractive in such close and dangerous proximity to a road constructed for vehicles of a different mode of locomotion, and one that is usually carefully avoided. The fact is that the soft clay at the bottom of the